



David R. Gifford, MD, MPH

Director of Health

Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

401.222.2231
401.272.5952 After hours
401.222.6548 Fax
TTY: 711
www.health.ri.gov

Public Health Press Release

For: Immediate Release
Date: April 1, 2010
Contact: Annemarie Beardsworth, 222-3998

HEALTH Confirms the Safety of Public Drinking Water and Reminds Residents to Conserve Water in Areas Affected by Flooding and Sewer System Overflow

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) reminds Rhode Islanders that water from municipal public water systems is safe to drink. Rhode Island has separate systems for public drinking water and for sewer treatment. Flooding has had minimal effect on the public drinking water systems. If a Boil Water Advisory is enacted, this information will be posted to HEALTH's website (www.health.ri.gov). There are currently precautionary Boil Water Advisories related to the flooding at four very small public water systems: Lindhbrook Water Company, Meadowlark, Inc., Ashaway Line and Twine, and Nuweetooun School at Tomaquag Museum. People who are supplied water from these water systems should boil their water for one minute before using it for drinking and cooking until the Boil Water Advisory has been lifted.

Private wells that have been flooded (wells that have standing water around them) should be considered contaminated. Private well owners should see <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/11067> for additional safety guidance.

Residents of areas where sewage treatment and pumping plants are not working properly due to flooding (Warwick and West Warwick) are reminded to conserve water whenever possible. Limit toilet flushing and showering, and avoid using dishwashers and washing machines. These appliances all drain water into the sewage treatment system. Continual use could cause sewage backup and overflow. Also, people should not drain sump pumps into toilets, tubs, or sinks. Drain them instead into your yard or storm water drains.

For additional flood safety reminders, see <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/11066>. For guidance on safely cleaning your home if you have had flooding, see <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/11068>. For more information, visit www.health.ri.gov or call 222-5960. For information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) call 800-621-FEMA (hearing impaired call 800-462-7585) or visit www.fema.gov.

###